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## **EIGHT HISTORIC TEXAS COURTHOUSES RECEIVE \$20 MILLION IN RESTORATION GRANTS**

**AUSTIN, Texas**—The Texas Historical Commission (THC) announced grant recipients for Round IX of the nationally recognized Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP) during its July 22 quarterly meeting in Austin. The THC awarded matching grants totaling \$20,162,369 to eight counties to aid in preservation of their historic courthouses, including four grants for full historic restorations.

Fannin, Karnes, Lynn, and San Saba counties received construction grants for full restorations.

Cameron, Kleberg, and Willacy counties received emergency grants to address critical issues including structural problems, water accumulation, and hazardous material removal.

Hunt County was awarded a planning grant to be applied toward the production of construction documents for a future application to the THCPP for a full restoration of their building.

The THCPP Round IX grants were made possible through a \$20 million appropriation by the 84th Texas Legislature. The THC received applications from 25 counties requesting \$78.8 million for projects totaling \$140.8 million. The agency determined grants by assessing 21 criteria including the building's age, endangerment, historical designations, and county support for the project. Emergency grants were based primarily upon the score assigned to the endangerment category.

"The goal of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program is to assist as many communities as possible," said THC Architecture Division Director Sharon Fleming. "The counties receiving grants are in need of this support to preserve historic landmarks, but to also make them safe and functional facilities for the staff and public they serve."

Since its creation in 1999, the THCPP has partnered with local governments to fully restore 63 historic courthouses in Texas, and assisted 28 applicants with emergency or planning projects. In addition to providing safe and functional buildings, restoration of historic courthouses benefits the state and local economies. Courthouse preservation projects have created more than 10,000 jobs in Texas and generated more than \$288 million in income. Restored courthouses reinvigorate historic downtowns and promote heritage tourism, a \$7.3 billion industry in Texas.

"Revitalization of Texas' historic county courthouses makes a significant economic impact to their communities," said THC Chairman John Nau, III. "They provide essential state services and serve as centerpieces of county history, culture and tourism."

Texas has the most historic courthouses (more than 240) in the U.S., which were deemed national treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and collectively included twice on the Trust's Most Endangered Places list. The THCPP has earned national and international attention with the awards from the Association for Preservation Technology International, the Texas Society of Architects, and the Society of Architectural Historians. In 2008, the program was recognized with a Presidential Award from the White House.

"The historic county courthouses of Texas are renowned for good reason," said THC Executive Director Mark Wolfe. "With continued support from the Texas Legislature, we remain committed to restoring every historic courthouse, maximizing the significant economic benefits these iconic buildings provide."

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For more information about the THCPP, visit [www.thc.texas.gov/thcpp](http://www.thc.texas.gov/thcpp) or contact the THC's Architecture Division at 512-463-6094.

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